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must. That a young man after becoming engaged to an adorable girl of his own age (his classmate in a coeducational college) should conceive himself to be madly in love with the maiden aunt of his *fiancée*; that all the members of the girl's family should forthwith work themselves into a "state" over this situation, and that each should stir into the witches' broth of the misunderstanding his own personal mixture of hurt feeling, pride and prejudice, good or bad taste—all this is part and parcel of our supersensitive modern life as it is lived. That a grandmother should feel herself hopelessly shut out from the mature life of her only daughter; that a gentle-souled mother should grieve in self-enforced silence over the transitory love-sorrow of her child; that a doting father, blind to the intricacies of the feminine mind, should at length fulminate a decision designed at all costs to save his "little girl"—all this, and much else in the story, is as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

There is real depth of feeling in this tale which is so subtle in its contrasts, so piquant in its variety, so enlivening in its surprises; and in truly American fashion the emotional appeal is associated with a wholesome common-sense that leaves us in the end not merely tantalized, but satisfied. Moreover, in its play of psychological moonlight over the troubled surface of a spiritual sea which remains in its depths undisturbed, "The Whole Family" seems very typical of the "new literature" in this country. It illustrates in a novel, attractive and not too serious form both sides of our modern fiction and our modern life—the sensitiveness to ideas, the sane, matter-of-fact recognition of things as they are. The book will be keenly enjoyed by all readers of to-day, and the future critic who writes the literary history of this period will not be likely to pass it over in silence.

CLARENCE H. GAINES.

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"THE WAY OF PERFECT LOVE"\*

It is neither the legitimate drama nor yet a natural and real presentation of life that we have to deal with in Georgiana Goddard King's beautiful symbolic poem, "The Way of Perfect Love"; rather it is a decorative composition, half pastoral, half lyric masque, done after the manner of the early Renaissance

\* "The Way of Perfect Love." By Georgiana Goddard King. The Macmillan Co. 1908.

painting; and as in such painting, it is not so much a copy of reality as a presentation of meanings that is offered us. This the author makes clear in the prose interpretation at the end of the poem. Who knows and loves the great era of Italian painting will find the hours spent in reading this poem not unlike a stroll into the placid background of an Umbrian painting. Indeed, the very faces of the characters as they look out upon us rise from old canvases and the accustomed eye will surely recognize Mantegna's Duke of Mantua, the Duchess as a Dosso Dossi Madonna, and among the handmaidens there are Leonardo's faintly smiling ladies and those, too, of Ambrogio da Predis, with their gentle and subtle eyes. Indeed, the characters have each their own accessories, their favorite *imprese* in the manner of the other art, as the Duchess who appears ever in conjunction with the sunflower and wearing the devices of the lioness and the eaglet in the brocading of her mantle and the fashioning of her jewelry. Each of the handmaidens, too, Arianna, Mafalda, Orsola, Ippolyta, Laodomia, Isotto and Fiametta—a poem lying hid just in their singing names—have each a special trait whereby they are known, the long white throat of one or the slender hands or thin red lips of others. Frankly, all this is decoration, but woven into the play are also modern meanings. Surely the three spinners, whose songs touch with malice or with encouragement the listener, stand for the world's wisdom. In the scene with Piepowder, the Wayfarer, it is a duel of worldly wisdom with the free and roving imagination and their attempt is to hem in the artistic temper and give it the sense that there is no escape from the world and its timely canniness. Thus Eva's song to the perturbed wanderer who has lost his love because he cannot wear shackles on his soul, and who now searches in compunction, is meant to bring before him an example of one who tries for the life abundant by means of much and unsifted experience and who ends in hell.

Micaëla's song is faintly reminiscent of Maeterlinck and is lovely enough to quote entire:

“Three queens in the tower are spinning a thread;  
Over their laps it lies tangled and red.

“In the choking white sea fog the stones drip with rime  
And hushed is the bell that rang vespers and prime.

"—Is it finished? My fingers are wrinkled with cold;  
We were spinning so long we must be very old.

"—A lock of the fine scarlet wool is unspent;  
But the vair on our bosoms is faded and rent.

"Strong from the void mounts the cry of the tide,  
While never sweet airs blow the cold mist aside.

"—The sun is dead, sister; it darkens to night,  
And how shall we measure the thread without light?

"Our lamps at the stair foot were left long ago,  
But we are too feeble to venture below."

Here in contrast to the sister's song we have a picture of those who shrink from the dangers of full life and who for safety's sake seek shelter in a high tower or an enclosed garden where the glare and the noise of reality do not penetrate. But night falls upon them, none the less, and it is to catch them empty-handed, feeble and terrified. These two disheartening alternatives are crowned by Maddalena's song, which is a bit of pure and well-known folk-lore (excepting the two final lines, which must have been drawn from some more recondite source) the gist of which seems to be the old Calvinistic theory of predestination and the assertion that nothing matters; that we are in Fate's hands and as we are born so will our life be. After all, however, it is easy to see that the poet has used her spinners as Shakespeare did his witches, merely to emphasize and intensify the thinker's own attitude, bewildering the bewildered, but strengthening the strong and to set these earthly forces in opposition to the imaginative or the religious life, both of which undertake to transmute experience and to derive beauty from ugliness, good from evil.

The Duchess, we should fancy, is the adventurer who leaves her enclosed gardens where her handmaidens bedeck and shield and divert her and where the Duke would fain shelter her from all experience, to go with the unknown and the unfelt, with the Wayfarer to try life.

Later the soul's freedom seeming to deny her the highest allegiance, she tries the pastoral life and staunches her wounds with the simple, natural cares and affections. And here the Shepherd shelters her. He is a gentle creature, led by the instincts and the affections, who, after the manner of the ancient mystics, *knows* just in as far as he loves. By virtue of the poignancy and sin-

cerity of his feeling he is able, when the struggle meets him, to transfer his earthly love to an heavenly devotion, so that giving all to love, love never fails him but more and more illuminates unto the perfect day. And this manner of love and of thought was, after all, the manner of St. Catherine of Siena, St. Theresa, the admirable Ruysbroeck and greater than they.

The Duchess, the seeker, is in the midway between heaven and earth with emotions and insights neither simple nor sure. Her way to perfection is the thorny one of many mistakes. Her emotions are all intellectualized and she seeks knowledge, sanity, health by testing her inward impulses. Her saving virtue is spiritual sincerity which often consists with extraordinary changes of front. Her course might easily be mistaken by the onlooker because her goal is visible only to her own eyes and the way opens before her and closes behind unmarked, even as the way of a ship in the sea. Hers is the modern nature to which renouncement is negation and atrophy, but which learns and grows only by absorption and assimilation, and ultimately finds its vocation in the administrative life of ceaseless growth and readjustment and therefore allies itself with the Duke, the man of science and the modern.

The allegory might be more easily understood in this day and generation if it were pointed out that the Duchess and Piepowder have practically effected an exchange of the conventional attributes and temperaments; so that the Duchess should be judged as a man and Piepowder as a woman. The Duchess finds completion in the active life, Piepowder in the imaginative. At the last, he, being the finest creation of the book, fitly holds the stage and delivers what is apparently the writer's ultimate view that love unfulfilled, so it but leave scope for dreams, is better than any satisfaction, and the soul's freedom with all its loneliness is higher than comfort:

"So shall forever young desire  
Quickened and warmed by his own fire,  
Following the still advancing goal,  
Guard silence in the enfranchised soul."

There are a great many single lines of significance and beauty throughout the poem, such as:

"The stars can counsel and can bless."

"So men sleep, after stricken fields.  
 So women when their hearts are eased.  
 Babes, too, that sob and are appeased."

"To want is more than to attain."

"Exiles we wander, stubborn sons of Eve,  
 Striving the gray day's burdens to deceive."

There is little poetry born in our Western world and such as comes is rarely met with acclaim or worthy of it, but the quality of the little book before us bespeaks a future harvest and it is no light pleasure for the moment to be led from the dust and din and clatter of our modern life into this "flowery nunnery."

LOUISE COLLIER WILLCOX.

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A STUDY OF RICHARD STRAUSS.\*

THE critic whose subject is music has probably to face as difficult a task as falls to the lot of any appraiser who chooses to regard with seriousness his function as a gauger of æsthetic values. Not only has he to deal with a kind of artistic material which is generally conceded to be of unparalleled subtlety and elusiveness, but he confronts an intellectual product which is in a constant state of flux and alteration. The instability of music is unique among the arts. Its essential elements change almost with every decade. The harmonic effects which are, to-day, at the disposal of any graduate from a conservatory class in composition, simply did not exist for Schumann—not to speak of Beethoven or Mozart; and the innovation of to-day is the platitude of to-morrow. Certain forms of musical expression which, when first used by path-breakers like Chopin, Liszt, and Wagner, occasioned shrill protests from the critical conservatives—who alone are timeless, deathless and immutable—have now passed into the common language of the art, and are at the service of every tyro who has learned how to put notes together; and, by the same token, harmonies which, as used to-day by Richard Strauss or Claude Debussy, are for many ears wanton and preposterous, and are denied all right to be classified as "music," will as certainly seem to the aural sense of our grandchildren not less innocently traditional than the cadences of "Home, Sweet Home."

\* "Richard Strauss" ("Living Masters of Music" Series). By Ernest Newman. New York and London: John Lane Company.